

THE

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*An APPEAL to the GOSPEL for the true Doctrine of  
DIVINE PREDESTINATION, concorded with the Ortho-  
dox Doctrine of GOD's FREE-GRACE, and MAN's  
FREE-WILL.*

By JOHN PLAIFERE, B. D.

[Continued from page 362.]

**T**HE *conversion* of a sinner, is the end which GOD seeketh in sending his word, and in calling men; the effect of calling, when it speedeth. It may briefly be defined, *the obedience of him that is called*, for it is his part to hear and obey the call. And in it may be considered from what a sinner is converted, and to what, that is, *from the power of satan unto GOD*. By this, the whole man is changed; in his *understanding*, he is turned from darkness to light; in his *will*, from idols of all sorts to serve the living GOD; in his *whole life*, from unrighteousness to holiness.

GOD's *Holy Spirit* working upon the heart of a sinner, is the prime, principal, efficient and powerful cause of his conversion, in the beginning, progress, and end of it: whence the prophet, *Turn us, and we shall be turned*. But the *word preached* is the ordinary, instrumental cause of it, though the same happy effect is often furthered by other things; such as *crosses and afflictions*, which humble the soul of man;

GOD's

GOD's blessings inviting him, the prayers of others, and the good *example* of such as are already converted.

But the great question is, what part the sinner himself beareth in his own conversion, being a living and reasonable subject: whether he be active or passive in it; whether he can further or hinder it; or whether it be possible for two, whom we suppose equally called, one to be converted, and not the other? If so, then whence this difference doth arise, whether from GOD, or from man?

The determination of these questions cannot be clear, until we have declared what is to be holden according to the scriptures, touching *GOD's free-grace* and *man's free-will*; which we will endeavour to bring to light, after so vehement conflicts of the learned in all ages, which have raised clouds of obscurity, to the loss of truth amongst the strivers for it.

Of *grace* and *free-will*, I will speak, first severally, then jointly: that so we may return to the point of our *conversion*, to behold, what is the part of GOD therein, and what of man.

By *grace* may be understood all that proceedeth from GOD out of free favour to an unworthy sinner, tending to his salvation: particularly, the internal illuminations, teachings, motions, inspirations, operations and gifts of the Holy Ghost, merited by Christ, to be given to the sinful sons of Adam, in their fit time and order, to raise them fallen, and to save them lost: whence I shall call it, with St. *Augustine*, the *grace of Christ*. There is in man no merit of *grace*, for then *grace* would be no *grace*; there is only an occasion, namely, the misery of man. But if any thing be named *grace*, and tend not to man's salvation, or be not in some degree fit, sufficient, and available to further this work, it is not to be esteemed worthy of the noble and blessed name, *grace*.

The most ancient distinction of *grace*, is that which we have in the *eighth article* of the Methodist-Episcopal church, and in divers *collects* of our liturgy, viz. into *preventing* or *exciting* *grace*; and *following* or *helping* *grace*: the former of these is represented in scripture, as *standing without*,  
calling,

calling, knocking; the latter, as *entered in, inhabiting, as in a temple or house.* God worketh in us to think that which is good, *with us* to will it, and *by us* to perform it.

The distinction of grace into *sufficient* and *effectual* is a frivolous distinction: for, how can that be *grace*, or sufficient, that never, as such, produceth any effect, but must have something more put to it to bring forth an effect? All *grace* is in itself sufficient and efficient, no less, no more; if there be a deficiency in the effect, it proceedeth from a defect in some other cause, or some other thing, than the defect of *grace*.

The power of *grace*, is like GOD's own, a glorious power; such as wrought in Christ, when GOD raised him from the dead, whence our conversion is called *a new birth, a new creation, the first resurrection.* For

1. The power to will that which is good, is created in us again, as it was at the first.

2. When this power is in us by that gift, or creation, it is not exerted by ourselves alone using that power, but by the continued help and co-operation of the divine energy; according to that of Bernard, *We have no endeavours to good, unless they are stirred up in us; and they are fruitless, if not farther assisted.*

3. Be we never so willing, the habits of faith or love are no more in our power, than it is in the power of a blind man to give himself sight, though he be most willing to see; no more than it is in him that hath *present within himself to will, but to do*, that which the law commandeth, *he findeth not*, except the Spirit help him. So that after we are willing and ready to receive, the mighty power of GOD worketh and giveth that which we desire: for our prayers imply three things; *first*, that we want something, and feel our want: *secondly*, that we cannot help ourselves to supply our want, and therefore go to another: *thirdly*, that he alone, to whom we go as suppliants, is able and ready to help us, and therefore we go to him. This is that which St. Paul teacheth, exhorting them that *received* and *obeyed* the gospel, to *work out their salvation*; having received



ceived the power to work : but because they might fear their own weakness, even in using that power in this working out their salvation, he encourages them, that they shall not work alone, for a stronger than they shall join with them, even GOD, who it is that worketh in them both *to will and to do*. Where we have full proof for the power of the *helpful grace* of GOD, but for *discriminating grace* not a tittle.

4. The manifest weakness of many in temptations and persecutions, testifieth, that they who in those are more than *conquerors* over *satan*, the flesh and the world, are defended by the mighty power of GOD, when they cry unto him.

Against whom then do these accusations lie? To say, that the will of man resisteth the power of GOD, as if it were stronger than it : that man doth more to the work of his faith than the grace of GOD : that GOD doth no more in us for good, than *satan* doth for evil, *viz.* incline, persuade, solicit, &c. I am no way guilty of these crimes. If GOD's power be resisted or frustrated, it yieldeth not out of weakness, but out of will, GOD not pleasing to put forth his power, where he is resisted or neglected. The best that we do in the bringing forth any good, is to yield, and to permit GOD to work upon us, to follow him leading or drawing of us, to accept of that he giveth us, to fence that which he soweth or planteth in us, not to mar that which he maketh, not to harden the heart when his voice is to be heard : in sum, to be passively obedient, more than actively. For this is that only, which the power of grace will not extend itself to, to necessitate, and to hold us up to an undecidable obedience; the reason is, because that power of GOD which buildeth up supernatural things, doth not destroy natural : but the possibility in the will to decline to evil, and the liberty to disobey, is not evil, but natural, being found in *Adam* before his fall; and as it was not impeached then by the supernatural grace which *Adam* had, no more is it now in us, by the grace of GOD that worketh in us. It now remains :

1. As Christ took the nature of mankind, and not of angels, so by his death he paid the price of redemption for the



the sins of the whole world; this agrees with the catechism of the church of England, *I believe in GOD the father, who hath made me and all the world: and in GOD the Son, who hath redeemed me and all mankind; and in GOD the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth me and all the elect people of GOD: where we may observe the great accuracy in the expression: creation is said to be common to all the world, redemption to all mankind, sanctification to all the elect.*

2. The promise of the gospel is universal to all who are within the hearing of it, and it might be truly and seriously proffered to any man alive whatsoever.

3. With the promise and word of the gospel there goeth ordinarily such grace of the holy Spirit as is sufficient to all under the gospel, to work in them to believe and obey it; and that all do not obey, proceedeth not from the want of grace on GOD's part, but from men's being wanting to the grace of GOD, to whom it is *in vain*, as is evident from numerous passages of the New Testament.

This may be illustrated by what *St. Chrysostom* saith on these words of *St. Paul, who loved me and gave himself for me*: "He declareth this to be meet, that every one of us should no less give thanks to Christ, than if he had come into the world only for his sake; for neither would Christ have refused to exhibit, even for one, so great a dispensation; he so loveth every particular man, even with the same affection wherewith he loved the whole world. That sacrifice was offered for our whole nature, and it was sufficient to save all; but to them only it will be profitable who have believed." And with that of *St. Augustine*, "As to the greatness and virtue of the price, Christ's blood is the redemption of the whole world; but such as pass away this present life without faith in Christ, and the sacrament of the new birth, are aliens to that redemption. Therefore although by that one nature of all, which for the sake of all was truly taken by our Lord, all are rightly said to be redeemed; all notwithstanding are not freed from captivity. That cup of immortality which was prepared with respect to GOD's gracious assistance, hath enough

“in it to profit all, but if it be not drunk off, it is nothing beneficial.” And no less to our purpose is that of the second homily, of the church of *England*, on the death and passion of our Saviour Christ, “Concerning the great mercy and goodness of our Saviour Christ, in suffering death universally for all men, &c.” And again, “But to whom did GOD give his Son? He gave him to the whole world, namely to *Adam*, and all that should come of him.” And afterwards, “It remaineth that I shew you how to apply Christ’s death to our comfort, as a medicine to our wounds, so that it may work the same effect in us, wherefore it was given, namely, the health and salvation of our souls. For as it profiteth a man nothing to have salve, unless it be well applied to the part infected; so the death of Christ shall stand us in no stead, unless we apply it to ourselves in such sort as GOD hath appointed.”

## CHAP. V.

## Of FREE-WILL.

THIS title now-a-days is in great disgrace: being rendered odious by men whose passionate zeal we could wish would confine itself at least to decency of expression. For there hath been a time, when the church of Christ strove as earnestly in the defence of free-will, as the handmaid of grace, against the *Manichees* and other heretics, as any do now against it: which, when learned men find in *Irenæus*, *Origen*, *Chrysostom*, and other great fathers, I can but wonder they should be so full of their lavish terms. As also I marvel they should be so mindful of the one part of a wise saying; *If GOD giveth no grace, how shall he save the world?* and so forgetful of the other; *If man hath no freedom of will, how shall GOD judge the world?* when they find both in the same authors\*. But be it as it will; if the thing be of GOD, I will not fear the envy of the name; and my defence thereof shall be with such caution, as by GOD’s help I will not offend against his grace.

Free-will

\* Augustine Ep. 46. and Jerom.

*Free-will is a natural power in a reasonable creature, whereby it can will or nill this or that, chuse it, or refuse it, be it good, be it evil.*

*Free-will to good* was put into the first man by GOD at his creation, a faculty of his reasonable soul, and was corroborated and guarded by supernatural grace, given by GOD to make him will more cheerfully, and constantly, the highest kind of good. But by the fall of *Adam* this supernatural grace, fortifying the will to good, was utterly lost, and the very freedom to any good of the superior kind, that is, any thing spiritual. Some freedom to natural and moral good acts is remaining, and to the outward good acts of religion, as to go to church, to hear, to attend, to consider, to compare the things delivered by the preacher of GOD's word, as a man can do the rules or definitions of any art or science. If then we seek for a *freedom of will* to spiritual and supernatural good in the nature of man now fallen, we shall not find it there, unless we find it restored and renewed by the grace of Christ, that goeth with the gospel.

The grace which restoreth this *freedom to the will*, cometh with the gospel, which preventeth man's will, and prepareth it by infusing into it the power to will the spiritual good things required by the gospel. Depress the nature of man as much as you will, call his will *enslaved*, or what you list; it will thence be the more evident that I magnify the grace of GOD, which is proportioned and fitted in goodness and power to quicken the dead, to strengthen the impotent, to loosen the captive *will* of man. This being the very grace of the gospel, that it maketh the commandments of it possible to be obeyed by man fallen, which the law doth not; so that no man, under the gospel, can be excused in his disobedience to it, from his want of power, to repent or believe.

*Freedom of will* I contend for, but it is on the left side, as I may call it, it is to will evil; that is, notwithstanding the grace of GOD, whereby I may will good, I may decline to evil, and leave the good. This was in *Adam* before his fall, a single, innocent possibility to decline to evil: nor should it seem strange that a creature should be mutable; or that



that it should be *proper* to GOD to be unchangeably good, or that the very supernatural grace that *Adam* had for his corroboration to good, did not render *his* will immoveable to evil. This natural freedom to evil is not taken away by grace, nor perhaps is it desirable that it should be, since it is the root of the praise of human righteousness; for he is to be commended that could transgress and would not, not he that was good and could be no other. Nor ought the example of the unalterably holy and righteous GOD to be objected against this, since he is above and out of all predicaments wherein we are.

This natural *freedom to evil* remaineth in man fallen, and there is now come to it over and above, *resistentia adnata*, a precipitate proneness unto evil, out of our thralldom to the dominion and tyranny of *satan*.

These two must carefully be severed; for when I use these terms, *the freedom to sin*, presently somebody takes me down, urging that the *freedom to sin* is the *bondage* of the will, not observing that the *freedom to sin* is natural, and before the fall; the *bondage to sin* since the fall; and these two differ as much as a living mortal man, and a dead man. *The freedom to evil* is not evil; but the practice of that freedom, and the proneness to evil which is now in us, is evil. That natural freedom to evil, grace attempteth not in this life to take away, but to keep it from coming into practice. That proneness to evil, grace taketh away, yet without impeaching the natural freedom to evil.

[To be continued.]

*Continued to Page 463*

GOD'S LOVE TO MANKIND. Manifested by disproving the Absolute Decree for their Damnation.

[Continued from page 371.]

THE Reasons that have convinced me of the untruth of absolute reprobation, now follow. And first of those that fight against the upper way.

They

They are drawn from the great evils that issue from it, which may be referred to two main heads.

1. The dishonour of GOD.

2. The overthrow of religion and government.

It *dishonoureth* GOD: for it chargeth him deeply with two things, no ways agreeable to his nature.

1. Men's eternal torments in hell.

2. Their sins on earth.

First, It chargeth him with men's *eternal torments* in hell, and maketh him to be the prime and invincible cause of the damnation of millions of miserable souls: the *prime* cause, because it reporteth him to have appointed them to destruction, of his own voluntary disposition, antecedent to all deserts in them; and the *invincible* cause, because it maketh the damnation of reprobates to be unavoidable, through GOD's absolute and uncontrollable decree; so that they can no more escape it, than poor *Astyanax* could avoid the breaking of his neck, when the *Grecians* tumbled him down from the tower of *Troy*.

Now this is a heavy charge, contrary to scripture, GOD's nature, and sound reason.

1. To *scripture*, which makes man the principal, nay the only cause of his own ruin. *Thy destruction is of thyself, O Israel; but in me is thy help.* Hosea xiii. 9. *As I live, saith the Lord, I will not the death of the wicked, &c. Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die? Ezek. xxxiii. 11. He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.* Lam. iii. 33.

2. It is contrary to GOD's nature, who declares himself a GOD *merciful, gracious, long-suffering, abundant in goodness*, Exod. xxxiv. 6. And he is acknowledged to be so by *David*: *Thou, Lord, art good and merciful, and of great kindness to them that call upon thee*, Psalm lxxxvi. 5.

3. It is contrary also to *sound reason*, which cannot but charge such a decree with extreme cruelty, and consequently remove it from the Father of mercies.

We cannot in reason think, that any man in the world can so far put off humanity, as to resolve with himself to  
marry

marry and beget children, that after they are born, and have lived a while with him, he may hang them up by the tongues, tear their flesh with scourges, and pull it from their bones with burning pincers; that by thus torturing them, he may shew his authority over them. Much less can we believe, without violence to reason, that the GOD of mercy can, out of his absolute pleasure, ordain infinite multitudes of his children, made after his own image, to everlasting fire; and create them one after another, that, after the end of a short life here, he might torment them without end, to shew his sovereignty over them.

But GOD (some say) is sovereign Lord of all creatures: they are truly and properly his own. Cannot he therefore dispose of them as he pleaseth, and do with his own what he will?

The question is not what an almighty sovereign power *can* do, but what a power that is just and good *may* do. By his absolute and naked power, he can cast away the whole mass of mankind; it is not repugnant to sovereignty: but by that actual power of his, which is always clothed with goodness and justice, he cannot.

For it is not compatible with these properties in GOD, to appoint men to hell of his mere will and pleasure, no fault at all of theirs pre-existing.

1. It is not compatible with *justice*, which is a constant will of rendering to every one his due; vengeance to whom vengeance is due, namely, to the obstinate and impenitent. "GOD is good," says St. *Austin*, "and GOD is just: he may without any desert free men from punishment, because he is good; but he cannot, without evil deservings, condemn any man, because he is just." In another place also he saith, "If GOD damn any man that by sin deserveth it not, he is not free from injustice."

2. Nor is it compatible with *goodness*, which is an inclination of communicating that good, which is in himself, to his creatures, as far as he can without wronging his *justice*. And therefore if GOD be good to *all*, it cannot be that he should, without any motive in the creature, provide for it from everlasting the greatest of all miseries.

Therefore



Therefore I doubt not but I may safely say, that the unavoidable damnation of so many millions cannot be absolutely intended by GOD, without the greatest injustice and cruelty, which may in no wise be imputed to GOD. *Plutarch*, speaking of the pagans, who, to pacify their gods, sacrificed to them men and women, saith, "It had been much better to deny the being of a GOD, than to think he delighteth in the blood of men." How much rather may we say, "It were better to be an atheist and deny GOD, than to believe or report him to be a devourer of the souls of men?" I will shut up my first reason with the words of *Prosper*: "GOD is the Creator indeed of all men, but yet of no man for this end, that he might be damned: the reason why we are created is one, and why we are damned is another."

Secondly, this opinion makes GOD the author, not of the first sin only that entered by *Adam*, but of all other sins that have been, are, or shall be committed to the world's end. No murders, robberies, rapes, adulteries, insurrections, treasons, blasphemies, heresies, persecutions, or any other abominations whatsoever, fall out at any time or in any place, but they are the necessary productions of GOD's almighty decree. The scriptures I am sure teach us another lesson. *Thou art not a GOD*, saith *David*, *that hath pleasure in wickedness*. Psalm v. 4. And so the son of *Sirac*: *Say not thou, It is through the Lord that I fell away; for thou oughtest not to do the things which he hateth. Say not thou, He hath caused me to err; for he hath no need of the sinful man*. Eccles. xv. 11, 12.

Pious antiquity hath constantly said the same, and proved it by sundry reasons, some of which follow. If GOD be the author of sin, then,

1. He is worse than the devil, because the devil doth only tempt and persuade to sin, and his action may be resisted: but GOD doth will and procure it by a *powerful* and *effectual* decree, which cannot be resisted. This is *Prosper's* argument, who to some, objecting that by *St. Austin's* doctrine, when "fathers defile their own daughters,"

"servants

"servants murder their masters, and men commit any horrible villanies; it cometh to pass because GOD hath so decreed;" answereth, that "if this were laid to the devil's charge, he might clear himself of the imputation; because though he be delighted with men's sins, yet he doth not, he cannot compel them to sin. What a madness therefore is it to impute that to GOD, which cannot be justly fathered upon the devil!"

2. He cannot be a *punisher* of sin; for none can justly punish those offences of which they are the authors. This is *Prosper's* argument too: "It is against reason to say, that he, who is the damner of the devil, would have any man to be the devil's servant." This reason *Fulgentius* useth likewise: "GOD is the avenger of that which he is not the author of." *Tertullian* also before them hath said, "He is not to be accounted the author of sin, who is the forbidding, yea, and the condemner of it."

3. He cannot be GOD, because he would not be just, nor holy, nor the Judge of the world; all properties essential to GOD. And this is *St. Basil's* reason, who hath written a whole homily against this wicked assertion. "It is all one," saith he, "to say that GOD is the author of sin, and to say he is not GOD."

I conclude, that the opinion, which chargeth the holy GOD with the sins of men, is neither good nor true.

Indeed the writers that have defended it (*Piscator* and a few more of the blunter sort excepted) have never said directly that GOD is the cause of sin; yet have they delivered those things, from which it follows by necessary consequence: for they say,

1. That as the decree of reprobation is absolute, so it is inevitable: those poor souls which lie under it must of necessity be damned. "It is," saith *Marlorat*, "a firm and stable truth, that the man whom GOD in his eternal counsel hath rejected, though he do all the good works of the saints, cannot possibly be saved."

2. That without sin this decree of reprobation cannot be justly executed. "GOD," saith *Piscator*, "did create men for

"for this very purpose, that they might fall; for otherwise he could not have attained his principal ends." He meaneth, the manifestation of his justice in the damnation of reprobates, and of his mercy in the salvation of the elect. *Maccovius* saith the same: "If sin had not been, the manifestation of justice and mercy (the damnation of reprobates) had never been."

3. That therefore GOD decreed, that reprobates should unavoidably sin, and sin unto death, that his eternal ordinance might be executed, and they damned. "We grant," saith *Zanchius*, "that reprobates are held so fast under GOD's almighty decree, that they cannot but sin and perish." A little after he saith, "We doubt not, that there lieth upon reprobates, by the power of their unchangeable reprobation, a necessity of sinning, yea, of sinning unto death, and consequently of perishing everlastingly."

*Calvin* also saith, that "reprobates are raised up by the unsearchable judgment of GOD, to illustrate his glory by their damnation." I will end this with that of *Piscator*: "Reprobates are precisely appointed to this double evil, to be punished everlastingly, and to sin; and therefore to sin, that they might be justly punished."

4. That as he hath immutably decreed, reprobates shall live and die in sin; so he procures their sins by his almighty hand, partly by withdrawing from them grace necessary for the avoiding it, and partly by moving and inclining them by his irresistible workings on their hearts, to sinful actions. *Calvin* saith, that "devils and reprobate men are not only held fast in GOD's fetters, so as they cannot do what they would, but are also urged and forced by GOD's bridle [ad obsequia præstanda] to do as he would have them." And in the next chapter these are his words: "Men have nothing in agitation, they bring nothing into action, but what GOD by his secret direction hath ordered." In those two chapters, that which he mainly aims at is, to shew that GOD doth not only behave himself privatively in procuring the sins of men, but doth also put forth powerful and positive acts in the bringing of them to pass. And in his



second book, after he had said, that GOD may be said to harden men by forsaking them, he putteth in another way, by which GOD hardeneth men, and that (he saith) cometh a great deal nearer to the propriety of the scripture phrases; namely, by stirring up their wills. GOD doth not only harden men by leaving them to themselves, but "by appointing their counsels, ordering their deliberations, stirring up their wills, confirming their purposes and endeavours, by the minister of his anger, satan."

The sum of all is; GOD, who from all eternity appointed many men to endless and unavoidable torments, decreed for the bringing about of their ruin, that they should without remedy live and die in a state of sin: and what he thus decreed from everlasting, he doth most powerfully effect in time, so governing, over-ruling, and working upon the wills of reprobates, that they have no liberty or ability at all of avoiding their sins, but must of necessity commit them.

Thus they make GOD the author of sin, as will appear yet plainer by these following considerations.

1. It is ordinary to impute sin to those, who have not so great an hand in it, as hath the Almighty by this opinion. For,

(1.) The devil is called a *father of lyes*, John viii. 44. and by the like reason, of all other sins; and therefore *he that committeth sin*, is said to be *of the devil*, and to be a child of the devil, 1 John iii. 8, 10. And sin is called a *work of the devil*, which the Son of GOD appeared to destroy, ver. 8. And why is the devil so called, but because he doth allure men by inward suggestions, and outward temptations? This is all he doth or can do. But GOD doth much more, if he necessitate, and by his decree first, and next by his powerful working in the souls of men, determine their wills irresistibly. For to *determine* is infinitely more, than barely to *persuade*; for as much as sin must needs follow the determination, but not the persuasion of the will. GOD is therefore a truer cause of sin, by this doctrine, than the devil.

(2.) Wicked

(2.) Wicked men are esteemed authors of their own offences, because they purpose, choose, and commit them, and are immediate agents therein.

But GOD (by this opinion) doth more; for he over-ruleth the purposes of men, and by an uncontrollable motion, proceeding from an immutable decree, carrieth all their deliberations, resolutions, and actions, precisely that very way, so that they cannot choose but do as they do, whatsoever they may think to the contrary. They have indeed a power in itself free to choose what they refuse, or to refuse what they choose; to determine themselves this way or that way, as liketh them best: but they have not a *free use* of this their power. GOD doth determine their will before it hath determined itself, and maketh them do those actions only, which his omnipotent will hath determined, and not which their wills have prescribed. More properly, therefore, may GOD be called the author of those offences.

(3.) Wicked counsellors, and they who allure and advise men to sin, are accounted of GOD and men to be the causes of those sins, to which they are the persuaders; and are punished for those mis-deeds, which others through their instigations have committed. So *Jezebel* was reputed the murderer of *Naboth*, because she counselled and contrived the doing of it. But what is counselling to forcing? Evil counsels may be refused, but an almighty power cannot be resisted. GOD therefore, that useth this (according to their doctrine) in the production of sins, is much more an author of them, than he that only useth the other.

2. If we could find a king, that so carried himself in procuring the ruin of any of his subjects, as (by this opinion) GOD doth in effecting the damnation of reprobates, we would all charge him with the ruin of those his subjects.

"Who would not abhor," saith *Moulin*, "a king speaking thus: I will have this man hanged; and that I may hang him justly, I will have him murder or steal? This king (saith he) would not only make an innocent man miserable, but wicked too; and would punish him for that offence, of which himself is the cause." So *Tiberius*,  
having

having a purpose to put certain virgins to death, because it was not lawful among the *Romans* to strangle virgins, caused them all to be deflowered by the hangman, that so they might be strangled. Who will not say, that *Tiberius* was the principal author of the deflowering of those maids? In like manner (say these) GOD hath a purpose of putting millions of men to the second death; but because it is not lawful for him, by reason of his justice, to put innocent men to death, he hath decreed that the devil shall deflower them, that afterwards he may damn them. It followeth therefore, that GOD is the main cause of those their sins.

3. That GOD is the author of men's salvation and conversion, all sides grant: and yet he doth no more in the procuring of them, than these men report him to do in the reprobates' impenitency and damnation. The salvation and conversion of the elect (say they) he hath *absolutely* and *antedecently*, without the fore-sight of any deservings of theirs, resolved upon; and by irresistible means in their several generations, draweth them to repent, believe, and endure to the end, that so they might be saved, and his absolute decree accomplished. On the other side, the damnation, the sins, and the final impenitency of reprobates, he hath of his will and pleasure *preemptorily* decreed: this his decree he executeth, drawing them on by his unconquerable power from sin to sin, till they have made up their measure, and in the end suffer that eternal vengeance, which he had provided for them. What difference is here in the course, which GOD taketh for the conversion and salvation of the elect, and the obduration and damnation of reprobates? And therefore what hindereth, but that GOD may as truly be styled the author of the sins of the one, as of the conversion of the other?

And thus it appears, that by absolute reprobation GOD is made to be the true cause of men's sins.

[To be continued.] To 163

BISHOP



BISHOP PATRICK'S *Picture of an Antinomian.*

WE meet with a faith in the world, more gallant, fine and delicate, than the plain and homely belief described in the bible. A *modish and courtly faith* it is, which sits still, and yet sets you in the lap of Christ. It passes under so many names, that I cannot stand to number them all. It is called a *casting of ourselves upon Christ*, a *relying on his merits*, a *shrouding ourselves under the robes of his righteousness*: and though sometimes it is called a *going to him for salvation*; there is this mystery in the business, that you may go, and not go; you may go and yet stand still; you may cast yourself upon him, and not come to him; or if you take one little step, and be at the pains to come to him, the work is done, and you need not follow him. It is indeed, a *resting*, not a *travelling* grace. And such a grand secret there is in it, that a man may rest before he stir a foot; he may lean on Christ, and approach no nearer him than he was before; he may lay hold on him, and yet remain at the greatest distance from him. It will carry you to the end of your way, before you are at the beginning: the very first step of it, is to stay yourself: the beginning of its motion, is to be at rest. Do you not see a strange enchantment in it already? Is it not a magical operation, much beholden to strength of fancy, and the witchcraft of imagination? For my part, I should take myself to be in a bad condition, if I dealt in such dangerous charms. I would grant my enemies had cause to exclaim, if I stood charg'd with such incantations. There is no juggling so artificial, whereby I could hope to hide the deceit, if I abused the world with these impostures. My own conscience, I mean, would indict me, and pronounce my condemnation, though I think, if the greatest part of the men among us, were to be judges, I need not fear their sentence against me. For the charm, I observe, is so powerful, and the fascination of such pleasure, that the numbers are not to be told which are bewitched with it. The multitude goes in crouds in this wide road: the voice  
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of the people cries up this as the only way to heaven. All the lewd men in the world are contented well to take this journey, which may be finished in one step, and to run this race, which may be accomplished in a breath, and for which the last breath in their body may serve as well as any else. There is no man but may thus lay hold of Christ; and having heard that this is faith, do what you can, it is not possible to beat off his hands. There is not a soul so wicked but may *thus* apply to itself his righteousness, and fancy all its sins to be covered therewith. It is the sweetest thing in the world to cast themselves into his arms, and expect not to go, but to be carried to heaven. They rest on him, and him only, for salvation. They rest on him so entirely for it, that they are loth to stir a foot to contribute any thing toward it. They would have him take all the honour of the business to himself, and are desirous to do not so much as one good action, but leave him to do all, and impute his doings to them. Thus they imagine themselves to be the only advancers of *free grace*: and they think there are none but they that set the crown upon Christ's head. Such an admirable subtilty there is in this faith, that they can serve their own interest by it, and yet seem all the while to be the best servants of Christ. They can fulfil their own desires, and yet sound aloud his glory. They can invade his rights as much as they list; and yet are the only persons that make it their care he should not be wronged.

Nay, it makes men think that GOD is beholden to them, for being so cautious as to give him nothing. He would not be so much obliged, if they should endeavour to become better. The only qualification that they know of for his favours, is not to be qualified at all to receive them. He owes, it seems, much of glory to their want of virtue. If they should give him more than they do, he would have less. To bring any thing to him, would be to rob him, and take away from him. His grace would lose its name, if they should study to attain it. It would not be so rich, if they were not poor and beggarly *in all good works*. And

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to be out of all danger of trusting to their own righteousness, they judge it the surest course to have none at all.

These are the men who make the grace of GOD so *free*, that he leaves nothing for himself. The riches of it is so abundant towards them, that he gives away all his own right. He makes such liberal grants to these favourites, that there remains nothing as a duty to him. He takes such great care of their pleasure, that he forgets his own; and loves to let them have their will so much, that he suffers his own to be crossed for their sake. It is not he, it should seem, but they that rule the world. His will bends to their desires; and since they have no mind to be good, they have invented a way that he may love them, though they continue bad. He sees them not in themselves, but in a disguise. They do not appear in their own colours, but in another's dress. He doth not behold them naked, but covered in the robes of Christ. And though they have a world of sins, yet they think they are all to be hid, while he looks upon their garments, and not upon them. And indeed so full is his grace, that he can have no title to their obedience, but only their own gratitude. He holds his kingdom and authority, only by their good will. If they do what he desires, it is their kindness, and more than they owe him. Since Christ's obedience is personally imputed to them, he cannot in justice require any at their hands. Since he hath performed the law in their stead, and made his righteousness theirs, he cannot expect that they should perform it too, nor exact any righteousness of *their own*, for this would be to demand the same debt twice; and to call for the payment of a bond, which hath been already satisfied. In fine, he can claim nothing as his due, but must be content with that which they will give him: and it is the safest way to give him little or nothing, lest they should at all abate of the freeness of what he is to give.

I hope your souls will never enter into this secret, nor follow the Antinomians in those groundless fancies. But you will rather put to your hands, to pull down that idol of faith, which hath been set up with so much devotion and, religiously



religiously worshipped among us : that dead image of faith, which so many have adored, trusted in, and perished.

Let me beseech you, as you love your souls, to be followers of faithful *Abraham*. Remember that such as he was, such must you be, if you hope to inherit the land of promise ; and that in his example, you meet with nothing earlier than this, that by *faith*, when he was called to go out into a place which he should afterwards receive for an inheritance, he obeyed, and went out, not knowing whither he went. This was the first thing wherein his faith employed itself, and the last was like unto it. For when he was tried by GOD, he offered up his only begotten son, who was to be the heir of that inheritance which was promised to him. From this active faith, no doubt, it is that he and all good christians are called *faithful*, and not for a *lazy* recumbency on Christ. If this were sufficient to make a person of that denomination, then we need no better character of a *faithful servant* or *steward* (which the holy writings sometimes mention) than such a one as follows. He is a person that relies upon his Master's merit ; and depends only on the worth and sufficiency of his Lord. He trusts in his goodness for a pardon of all his faults, and hopes he will esteem him a good servant, because he is a good master. He leans upon his arm, and clasps fast about him, and resolves not to let him go till he hath paid him his wages. He embraces him kindly, and hopes he will account him righteous, because he is so himself. And, in one word, he applies to himself all the good works that his master hath performed, and prays to be excused if he doth not his business, because his Lord can do it better. Would you be content to be thus served ? Do not imagine, then, that GOD will be served after this fashion ; or that such an ill-favoured notion as this, is the best that can be found, to compose the definition of a true believer. But first do all that you can, and then acknowledge yourself to be an unprofitable servant. Let it be your care to follow your work, and then rely only upon the goodness of our Lord to give you a reward. Be sure that you be inwardly righteous

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teous, and then no doubt the righteousness of Christ will procure acceptance, and bring you to that happiness which you can no ways deserve.

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## A S E R M O N

[By Dr. Cudworth.]

On 1 JOHN ii. 3, 4.

*And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.*

*He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.*

WE have much inquiry concerning knowledge. The sons of Adam are now as busy as ever himself was, about the *tree of knowledge* of good and evil, shaking the boughs of it, and scrambling for the fruit; whilst many are too unmindful of the *tree of life*. And though there be now no cherubim with their flaming swords to fright men off from it; yet the way that leads to it seems to be solitary and untrodden. There are many that speak of new discoveries of truth, of dawnings of gospel-light; and no question but GOD hath reserved much of this for the very evening and sun-set of the world; for *in the latter days knowledge shall be increased*: but yet I wish we could at the same time see that *day-dawn* which the apostle speaks of, and that *day-star* arise in men's hearts. I wish, whilst we talk of *light*, and dispute about *truth*, we could walk more as *children of the light*. For if St. John's rule be good, that no man truly knows Christ but he that *keepeth his commandments*; it is much to be suspected, that many of us who pretend to light, have thick darkness within overspreading our souls.

There are now many large volumes written concerning Christ, thousands of controversies discussed, infinite problems determined concerning his Divinity, humanity, union of both

together, and what not? So that our *bookish christians*, that have all their religion in writings and papers, think they are now completely furnished with all kind of knowledge, concerning Christ: and when they see all their leaves lying about them, they think they have a goodly stock of knowledge and truth, and cannot possibly miss of the way to heaven; as if religion were nothing but a little *book-craft*, a mere *paper-skill*.

But if the apostle's rule here be good, we must not judge of our knowledge of Christ by our skill in books, but by our keeping of his commandments. And that I fear will discover many of us (notwithstanding all this light, which we boast of) to have nothing but *Egyptian* darkness within.

The vulgar think they know Christ enough out of their creeds, and catechisms, and confessions of faith: and if they have but a little acquainted themselves with these, and like parrots have conned the words of them, they doubt not but they are sufficiently instructed in all the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. Many of the more learned, if they can but dispute about Christ, imagine themselves to be grown great proficients in the school of Christ.

The greatest part of the world, learned or unlearned, think that there is no need of purifying their hearts for the right knowledge of Christ: but though their lives be never so wicked, their hearts never so foul, yet they may know Christ sufficiently out of their systems and bodies of divinity; although our Saviour prescribeth his disciples another method to come to the knowledge of divine truths, by doing of GOD's will. *He that will do my Father's will, (saith he) shall know of the doctrine whether it be of GOD.* He is a christian indeed, not that is only *book-taught*, but that is *GOD-taught*; he that hath an *unction from the Holy One, that teacheth him all things*; he that hath the Spirit of Christ within him, which *searcheth out the deep things of GOD*.

Cold maxims and dry disputes could never yet of themselves beget the least glimpse of true heavenly light, the least sap of saving knowledge in any heart. All this is but the  
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groping of a poor dark spirit of a man after truth, to find it out with his own endeavours, and feel it with his own cold and benumbed hands. A painter that would draw a rose, though he may flourish some likeness of it in figure and colour, yet can never paint the scent and fragrancy; or if he would draw a flame, he cannot put heat into his colours: he cannot make his pencil drop a sound. All the skill of cunning artizans cannot put a principle of life into a statue of their own making, neither are we able to inclose in words and letters, the life, soul and essence of any spiritual truths, and as it were to incorporate it in them.

*There is a spirit in man that giveth wisdom; and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth understanding.* But we shall not meet with this spirit any where but in the way of obedience; the knowledge of Christ, and the keeping of his commandments, must always go together.

*Hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.*

I shall not need to force any thing from these words: I shall only take notice of some few observations which drop from them of their own accord, and then conclude with an application.

First then, If this be the right way of discovering our knowledge of Christ, viz. by our keeping his commandments; then we may safely draw conclusions concerning our state from the conformity of our lives to the will of Christ.

Would we know whether we know Christ aright, let us consider whether the life of Christ be in us: he that hath not the life of Christ in him, hath nothing but a fancy of Christ, not the substance of him. He only that builds his house upon Christ dwelling and living in his heart, *buildeth it upon a rock*; and when the floods come, and the winds blow, and the rains descend and beat upon it, it shall stand impregnable. But he that builds his comfort upon a persuasion that GOD from all eternity hath decreed him to life, and seeketh not for GOD really dwelling in his soul, builds upon a quicksand, which shall suddenly sink and be swallowed

swallowed up: *His hope shall be cut off, and his trust shall be as a spider's web; he shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand; he shall hold it fast, but it shall not endure.*

We are no where commanded to pry into these secrets, but to *make our calling and election sure.* We have no warrant in scripture to peep into these hidden rolls and volumes of eternity, and to persuade ourselves that we are elected to everlasting happiness before we see the *image of GOD* stamped upon our hearts. GOD's everlasting decree is too dazzling an object for us to set our eye upon. It is far easier for us to look upon the rays of his goodness and holiness, as they are reflected in our hearts, and there to read the mild and gentle characters of GOD's love to us, in our love to him, and our hearty compliance to his heavenly will: as it is safer for us if we would see the sun, to look upon it here below in a pail of water, than to cast our eyes upon the body of the sun itself, which is too radiant for us. The best assurance that any one can have of his interest in GOD, is doubtless the conformity of his soul to him. Those divine purposes, whatsoever they be, are altogether unknowable by us, they lie wrapt up in everlasting darkness, and covered in a deep abyss: who is able to fathom the bottom of them?

Let us not therefore make this our first attempt towards GOD and religion, to persuade ourselves of these everlasting decrees: for if at our first flight we aim so high, we shall but scorch our wings, and be struck back with lightning, as those giants of old were, that would attempt to assault heaven. And indeed it is a most gigantical essay, to thrust ourselves so boldly into the lap of heaven; it is the prank of a *Nimrod*, of a *mighty hunter*, thus rudely to deal with GOD. The way to obtain a good assurance of our title to heaven is, not to climb up to it by a ladder of our own persuasions, but to dig low by humility and self-denial. And though this may seem to be the farthest way about, yet indeed it is the nearest way to it. We must, as some of the *Greeks* speak, *ascend downward*, and *descend upward*, if we would indeed come to heaven, or get a true persuasion of our title to it.

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The most triumphant confidence of a christian riseth safely on this low foundation. When our heart is once tuned into a conformity with the word of GOD; when we feel our will perfectly concur with his will, we shall then presently perceive a *Spirit of Adoption* within ourselves teaching us to cry, *Abba, Father*. We shall not then care for peeping into those hidden records of eternity, to see whether our names be written there in golden characters: no, we shall find a copy of GOD's thoughts concerning us, written in our breasts. There we may read the characters of his favour to us: there we may feel an inward sense of his love to us, flowing out of our unfeigned love to him. And we shall be more persuaded of it, than if any of those winged watchmen above, that are privy to heaven's secrets should come and tell us, that they saw our names enrolled in those *volumes of eternity*. Whereas on the contrary, though we strive to persuade ourselves never so confidently that GOD from all eternity hath elected us to life and happiness, if we yet entertain any iniquity within our hearts, do what we can, we shall find many a cold qualm now and then seizing upon us at approaching dangers: and when death shall grimly look us in the face, we shall feel our spirits faint away, though we strive to raise and recover them never so much with the *strong waters* and *aqua-vitæ* of our own ungrounded presumptions. But a good conscience will be better to a christian, than *health to his navel, or marrow to his bones*; it will be an everlasting cordial: it will be softer than a bed of down, and he may sleep securely upon it in the midst of tempestuous and raging seas. A good conscience is the best looking-glass of heaven; in which the soul may see GOD's thoughts and purposes concerning it, as if so many shining stars reflected to it. *Hereby we know Christ: hereby we know that Christ loves us, if we keep his commandments.*

Secondly, If hereby we know that we know Christ, by our keeping his commandments: then *the knowledge of Christ doth not consist merely in a few barren notions, in a form of certain dry and sapless opinions.*

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Christ came not into the world to fill our heads with mere speculations; to kindle a fire of contentious disputes amongst us, and to warm our spirits against one another with angry and peevish debates, whilst in the mean time our hearts remain all ice towards GOD. Christ came not to possess our brains with some cold opinions that send down nothing but a benumbing influence upon our hearts. He is the christian whose heart beats with the truest pulse towards heaven: not he whose head spinneth out the finest cobwebs.

I wish it were not the distemper of our times, to make men solicitous about this and that speculation, which will not render them any thing better in their lives, or the liker unto GOD; whilst there is no care taken about *keeping of Christ's commandments*, and being renewed in our minds, according to the image of GOD, in righteousness and true holiness. We say, *Lo, here is Christ*; and, *Lo, there is Christ*, in these and these opinions; whereas in truth Christ is neither here, nor there, nor any where, but where the Spirit of Christ, where the life of Christ is.

Do we not open and lock up heaven with the private key of this and that opinion? Do we not suppose that though a person observe Christ's commandments never so sincerely, and serve GOD with faith and a pure conscience, yet because he is not of our opinion, he hath not the right watch-word, he must not pass the guards into heaven? Do we not make this and that opinion, this and that outward form, to be the *wedding-garment*, and boldly sentence those to outer-darkness that are not invested therewith? Whereas every true christian finds the least dram of hearty affection towards GOD, to be more cordial and sovereign to his soul, than all the speculative notions and opinions in the world; and though he study also to inform his understanding aright, and free his mind from all error and misapprehensions; yet it is nothing but the life of Christ deeply rooted in his heart, which is the chymical elixir that he feeds upon. He feels himself safely anchored in GOD, though perhaps he is not acquainted with many of those subtilties

subtilties which others make the alpha and omega of their religion. Neither is he scared with those childish affrightments, with which some would force their private conceits upon him : he is above the superstitious dreading of mere speculative opinions, as well as the superstitious reverence of outward ceremonies : he cares not so much for subtilty as for soundness and health of mind. And indeed it is well spoken by a noble philosopher, that *without purity and virtue GOD is nothing but an empty name* ; so it is true here, that without Christ's commandments, without *the life of Christ* dwelling in us, whatsoever opinion we entertain of him, Christ is only named by us, he is not known.

Knowledge indeed is a thing far more excellent than riches, outward pleasures, worldly dignities, or any thing else in the world besides holiness and the conformity of our wills to the will of GOD : but yet our happiness consisteth not in it, but in a certain divine temper and constitution of soul.

But it is a piece of that corruption that runneth through human nature, that we prize truth more than goodness, and knowledge more than holiness. We think it a gallant thing to be fluttering up to heaven with our wings of knowledge : whereas the highest mystery of a divine life here, and of perfect happiness hereafter, consisteth in nothing but mere obedience to the divine will. Happiness is nothing but that inward sweet delight that arises from the harmonious agreement between our wills and GOD's will.

There is nothing in the whole world able to do us good or hurt, but GOD and our own will : neither riches nor poverty, nor disgrace, nor honour, nor life, nor death, nor angels, nor devils : but willing and not willing as we ought. Should hell itself cast all its fiery darts against us, if our will be right, if it be informed by the divine will, they can do us no hurt ; we have then (if I may so speak) an enchanted shield, that is impenetrable and will bear off all. GOD will not hurt us, and hell cannot hurt us, if we will nothing but what GOD wills. Nay, then we are acted by GOD himself, and the whole Divinity floweth in upon us : and when  
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we have cashiered this self-will of ours, which did but shackle and confine our souls, our wills shall then become truly free, being widened and enlarged to the extent of GOD's own will. *Hereby we know that we know Christ indeed*, not by our speculative opinions concerning him, but by our keeping of his commandments.

Thirdly, If hereby we are to judge whether we truly know Christ by our keeping his commandments; so that he that saith he knoweth him and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar; then, it was not the design of the gospel, to give the world an indulgence to sin, upon what pretence soever.

But we are too prone to make such misconstruction of it; as if GOD had intended nothing else in it, but to dandle our corrupt nature, and contrive a smooth and easy way for us to come to happiness, without the toilsome labour of subduing our sinful affections: as if the gospel were nothing else but a declaration to the world, of GOD's engaging his affections from all eternity on some particular persons in such a manner, as that he would resolve to love them and dearly embrace them, though he never made them partakers of his image, in righteousness and true holiness: and though they should remain under the power of all their sins, yet they should still continue his *beloved ones*, and he would notwithstanding at last bring them to heaven.

And indeed nothing is more ordinary than for us to shape out such monstrous notions of GOD unto ourselves, by looking upon him through the *coloured medium* of our own corrupt hearts. And therefore because we can fondly love and hate, and sometimes hug, the very vices of those to whom our affections are engaged, we are ready to shape out a deity like ourselves, and to fashion out such a god, as will, in Christ at least, hug the very wickedness of the world; and in those that be once his own, by I know not what fond affection, connive at their very sins, so that they shall not make the least breach betwixt himself and them. But there is no such god as this any where in the world, but only in some men's false imaginations, who know not all this while, that they look upon themselves instead of GOD, and  
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make an idol of themselves, which they worship for him; being so full of themselves that whatsoever they see round about them, even GOD himself, they colour with their own tincture.

But GOD will ever dwell in spotless light, howsoever we paint him and disfigure him here below; he will still be circled about with his own rays of unstained and immaculate glory. And though the gospel be not GOD as he is in his own brightness, but GOD veiled and masked to us, GOD in a state of humiliation and condescend, as the sun in a rainbow: yet it is nothing else but a clear and unspotted mirror of divine holiness, goodness, purity; in which attributes lies the very life and essence of GOD himself. The gospel is nothing else but GOD descending into the world in our form and conversing with us in our likeness, that he might allure and draw us up to himself, and make us partakers of his divine form: (as *Athanasius* speaks) *GOD was therefore incarnated and made man, that he might deify us*, that is, (as *St. Peter* expresseth it) make us *partakers of the divine nature*. Now, I say, the very proper character and essential tincture of GOD himself is nothing else but goodness. Nay, I may be bold to add, that GOD is therefore GOD, because he is the highest and most perfect good; and good is not therefore good, because GOD out of an arbitrary will of his would have it so. Whatsoever GOD doth in the world, he doth it as suitable to the highest goodness; the idea and fairest copy of which is his own essence.

That I may come nearer to the thing in hand: GOD, who is absolute goodness, cannot love any of his creatures and take pleasure in them, without bestowing a communication of his goodness and likeness upon them. GOD cannot make a gospel, to promise men life and happiness hereafter, without being regenerated and made partakers of his holiness. As soon may heaven and hell be reconciled together, as GOD can be fondly indulgent to any sin, in whomsoever it be. As soon may light and darkness be espoused together, and midnight be married to the noon-day, as GOD be joined in a league of friendship to any wicked soul.

The great design of GOD in the gospel is, to clear up this mist of sin and corruption which we are surrounded with, and to bring up his creatures out of the *shadow of death*, to the *region of light* above, the land of truth and holiness. The great mystery of the gospel is to establish a GOD-like frame and disposition of spirit, which consists in righteousness and true holiness, in the hearts of men. And Christ, who is the great and mighty Saviour, came on purpose into the world, not only to save from *fire and brimstone*, but also to save us from our *sins*. Christ hath therefore made an expiation of our sins by his death upon the cross, that we being thus *delivered out of the hands of these our greatest enemies*, might *serve GOD without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life*. The end of the whole gospel is, not only to cover sin by spreading the purple robe of Christ's death and suffering over it, but to convey a powerful and mighty spirit of holiness, to cleanse us and free us from it. And this is a greater grace than the former, which still go both together in the gospel; the free pardon of sin in the blood of Christ; and the delivering us from sin, by the spirit of Christ dwelling in our hearts.

Our Saviour Christ came (as *John the Baptist* tells us) *with a fan in his hand, that he might thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into his garner: and to burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire*. He came (as the prophet *Malachi* says) *like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap; to sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and to purify all the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness*.

The *first Adam*, as the scripture tells us, brought in a real defilement, which, like a loathsome leprosy, hath overspread all mankind: and therefore the *second Adam* must really convey such an immortal seed of grace into the hearts of true believers, as may prevail still more and more in them, till it have at last quite wrought out that poison of the serpent.

And cannot GOD save us from our sins? Have the fiends of darkness then, these poor forlorn spirits, that are fetter-

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ed and chained up in the chains of their own wickedness, any strength to withstand the force of infinite *goodness*, which is infinite *power*? Or do they not rather skulk in holes of darkness, and fly like bats and owls, before the approaching beams of this Sun of righteousness? Is GOD powerful to kill and to destroy, to damn and to torment? And is he not powerful to save? Nay, it is the sweetest flower in all the garland of his attributes, it is the diadem of his crown of glory, that he is *mighty to save*: and this is far more magnificent for him, than to be stiled *mighty to destroy*. For that, except it be in a way of justice, speaks no power at all, but mere impotency; for the root of all power is goodness.

Or must we say, lastly, that GOD indeed is able to rescue us out of the power of sin and satan, when we sigh and groan towards him; but yet sometimes, to exercise his absolute authority, his uncontrollable dominion, he delights rather in plunging wretched souls down into infernal night and everlasting darkness? What shall we then make the GOD of the whole world? Nothing but a cruel and dreadful *Erinnys*, with *curled fiery snakes* about his head, and *fire-brands* in his hands, thus governing the world. Surely this will make us either secretly think that there is no GOD at all in the world, if he must needs be such, or else to wish heartily there were none. But doubtless GOD will at last confute all these our misapprehensions of him; he will unmask our hypocritical pretences, and clearly cast the shame of all our sinful deficiencies upon ourselves, and vindicate his own glory from receiving the least stain or blemish by them. In the mean time, let us know that the gospel now requireth far more of us than the law did; for it requireth a *new creature*; a *divine nature*; *Christ formed in us*: but yet withal it bestoweth a *quickening spirit*, an *enlivening power*, to enable us to express that which is required. Whosoever therefore truly knows Christ, the same also *keepeth his commandments*. But *he that saith I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him*.

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I have now done with the first part of my discourse, concerning these observations, which arise naturally from the words. I shall, in the next place, proceed to make some application of them.

Now therefore, let us consider whether we know Christ indeed: not by our acquaintance with the systems and models of divinity, nor by our skill in books: but by our keeping of Christ's commandments. Books can but represent spiritual objects to our understandings; which yet we can never see in their own true colour and proportion, until we have a divine light within, to irradiate and shine upon them. Though there be never such excellent truths concerning Christ and his gospel set down in words; yet they will be but unknown characters to us, until we have a living Spirit within us that can decypher them; until the same Spirit, by secret whispers in our hearts, comment upon them, which did at first indite them. There are many that understand the *Greek* and *Hebrew* of the scripture, that never understood the language of the Spirit.

The life of divine truths is better expressed in actions than in words: words are nothing but dead resemblances and pictures of those truths which live and breathe in actions; and *the kingdom of GOD* (as the apostle speaketh) *consisteth not in word, but in life and power.* Let us not then only talk and dispute of Christ, and so measure our knowledge of him by our words; but let us shew our knowledge connected with our lives and actions; let us really manifest that we are Christ's sheep indeed, that we are his disciples, by that holiness which we wear, and by the fruits that we daily yield in our lives and conversations; for *herein* (saith Christ) *is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.*

Let us not judge of our knowing Christ by our ungrounded persuasions that Christ from all eternity hath loved us, and given himself particularly for us, without the conformity of our lives to Christ's commandments: without the real partaking of the image of Christ in our hearts. The great  
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mystery of the gospel doth not lie only in Christ without us (though we must know also what he hath done for us) but the very pith and kernel of it consists of Christ inwardly formed in our hearts.

Nothing is truly ours but what lives in our spirits. Salvation itself cannot save us as long as it is only without us; no more than health can cure us, and make us sound, when it is not within us, but somewhere at a distance from us; no more than arts and sciences, whilst they lie only in books and papers without us, can make us learned. Though the gospel be a sovereign and medicinal thing in itself, yet the mere knowing and believing of the history of it will do us no good: we can receive no virtue from it, till it be inwardly digested in our souls; till it be made ours, and become a living thing in our hearts.

All that Christ did for us, in the flesh, when he was here upon earth, will not save us from our sins, unless by his Spirit he dwell within us. It will not avail us that he was born of a virgin, unless the *power of the Most High overshadow* our hearts, and beget him there likewise. It will not profit us that he died upon the cross for us, unless we be *baptized into his death*, by the mortification of all our sins; unless *the old man of sin be crucified* in our hearts. Christ indeed hath made an expiation for our sins, and the blood of Christ is the only sovereign balsam to free us from the guilt of them; but yet besides the *sprinkling of the blood of Christ* upon us, we must be made partakers also of his Spirit. Christ came into the world, as well to redeem us from the power of our sins, as to free us from the guilt of them. *You know* (saith St. John) *that he was manifested to take away our sins; whosoever therefore abideth in him, sinneth not; whosoever sinneth, hath not seen or known him.* Lo the end of Christ's coming into the world; Lo a design worthy of GOD manifested in the flesh.

Christ did not take all those pains, to lay aside his robes of glory, and to undergo a reproachful life, and at last to be abandoned to a shameful death; he did not do all this merely to bring a notion into the world, without the mending

mending and reforming of the world: so that men should still be under the power of the prince of darkness: only they should not be thought so; they should still remain as full of all the filthy sores of sin and corruption as before; only, they should be *accounted whole*! Surely Christ did not undergo all this to so little purpose: he would not take all this pains for us, that he might be able at last to put into our hands nothing but a blank. *He was with child, he was in pain and travail, and hath he brought forth nothing but wind?* hath he been delivered of the east-wind? Is the great design that was so long carried on in the womb of eternity, now proved abortive, or else nothing but a mere windy birth? No surely; the end of the gospel is *life and perfection*, 'tis a *divine nature*, 'tis a *godlike* frame and disposition of spirit, 'tis to make us partakers of the *image of GOD*, in righteousness and true holiness, without which salvation itself were but a notion.

Holiness is the best thing that GOD himself can bestow upon us, either in this world or the world to come. True evangelical holiness, that is, *Christ formed* in the hearts of believers, is the very quintessence of the gospel. But many of us are like those children, whose stomachs are so vitiated, that they think ashes, coal, mud-wall, or any such trash, more pleasant than the most wholesome food: such sickly appetites have we about spiritual things, that hanker after I know not what vain shews of happiness, whilst in the mean time we neglect that which is the only true food of our souls, that is able to nourish them up to *everlasting life*.

I mean by holiness, nothing else but GOD stamped and printed on the soul. And we may please ourselves with what conceits we please; but so long as we are void of this, we do but dream of heaven and I know not what fond paradise, we do but blow up and down an airy bubble of our own fancies, which riseth out of the froth of our vain hearts; we do but court a painted heaven, and woo happiness in a picture, whilst in the mean time, a true and real hell will suck our souls into it, and make us sensible of a solid woe, and substantial misery.

Are



Are there not many of us, that pretend much to Christ, that are plainly in our lives as proud, ambitious, vain-glorious as any others? Are not many of us as much under the power of unruly passions; as cruel, revengeful, malicious, censorious as others? That have our minds as deeply engaged in the world, and as much enslaved to riches, gain, profit, those great admired deities of the sons of men, and our souls as much overwhelmed and sunk with the cares of this life? Do not many of us give ourselves to the pleasures of the flesh, and, though not without remorse of conscience, yet every now and then secretly soak ourselves in them? Are there not many of us that have as deep a share in injustice and oppression, *in vexing the fatherless and the widows*? I wish it may not prove some of our cases at the last day, to use such pleas as these unto Christ in our behalf: *Lord, I have prophesied in thy name; I have preached many a zealous sermon for thee; I have kept many a long fast; have been very active for thy cause; nay, I never made any question but that my name was written in the book of life: when yet, alas! we shall receive no other return from Christ but this, I know you not, depart from me, ye workers of iniquity.* I am sure there are too many of us, that have long pretended to Christ, who make little or no progress in true christianity, that is, holiness of life; that ever hang hovering in a twilight of grace, and never seriously put ourselves forward into clear day-light, but esteem the glimmering *crepusculum* which we are in, and like that faint twilight better than broad, open day: whereas, *the path of the just (as the wise man speaks) is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.* I am sure there are many of us that are perfect dwarfs in our spiritual stature, like those *filly women* (that St. Paul speaks of) *laden with sins, and led away with divers lusts, that are ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth; that are not one jot taller in christianity than we were many years ago; but have still as sickly, crazy, and unsound a temper of soul, as we had long before.*

Indeed

Indeed we seem to do something : we are always moving and lifting at the stone of corruption that lies upon our hearts, but yet we never stir it notwithstanding, or at least never roll it off from us. We are sometimes a little troubled with the guilt of our sins, and then we think we must thrust our lusts out of our hearts ; but afterwards, we sprinkle ourselves over with, I know not what, *holy water*, and so are contented to let them still abide quietly within us. We do every day truly confess the same sins, and pray against them ; and yet still commit them as much as ever, and lie as deeply under the power of them. We have the same water to pump out in every prayer, and still we let the same leak in upon us again. We make a great deal of noise, and raise a great deal of dust with our feet, but we do not move from off the ground on which we stood ; we do not go forward at all : or if we do sometimes make a little progress, we quickly lose again the ground which we had gained : as if religion were nothing else but a dancing up and down upon the same piece of ground, and making several motions and friskings on it ; and not a sober journeying and travelling onwards to some certain place. We do and undo. We weave sometimes a *w.b. of holiness*, but then we let our lusts come and undo and unravel all again. Like *Sisyphus* in the fable, we roll up a mighty stone with much ado, sweating and tugging up the hill, and then we let it go and tumble down again to the bottom : and this is our constant work.

What is it that thus cheats and gulls us out of our religion ? that make us thus constantly tread the same ring and circle of duties, where we make no progress at all forwards ; and the farther we go, are still never the nearer to our journey's end ? What is it that thus starves our religion, and makes it look like those *kine* in *Pharaoh's* dream, *ill-favoured and lean-fleshed*, that it hath no colour in its face, no blood in its veins, no life or heat in all its members ? What is it that thus be-dwarfs us in our christianity ? What low, sordid, unworthy principles do we act by, that they hinder our growth, and make us stand at a stay, and keep us always at the very porch and entrance where we first began ?

gan? Is it a sleepy, sluggish conceit, that it is enough for us, if we be but once in a *state of grace*; if we have but once stepped over the threshold, we need not take so great pains to travel any farther? Or is it another damping, choaking, stiling opinion, that Christ hath done all for us already *without us*, and nothing need more be done *within us*? No matter how wicked we are in ourselves, for we have holiness *without us*; no matter how sickly and diseased our souls are within, for they have health without them. Why may we not as well be satisfied and contented to have happiness without us to all eternity, and so ourselves for ever continue miserable? *Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doth righteousness is righteous, but he that committeth sin is of the devil.* Let us not only talk and dispute of Christ, but let us indeed *put on the Lord Jesus Christ*. Having those great and precious promises, which he hath given us, let us strive to be made *partakers of the divine nature, escaping the corruption that is in the world through lust*; and being begotten again to a lively hope of enjoying Christ hereafter, let us *purify ourselves as he is pure*.

Let us express a sweet harmonious affection in these jarring times: that so, if it be possible, we may tune the world into better music. Especially in matters of religion, let us strive with all meekness to instruct and convince one another. Let us endeavour to promote the gospel of peace: the dove-like gospel, with a dove-like spirit. This was the way by which the gospel was at first propagated in the world: *Christ did not cry or lift up his voice in the streets; a bruised reed he did not break, and the smoking flax he did not quench*; and yet he brought forth judgment unto victory. He whispered the gospel to us from mount Sion, in a still voice; and yet the sound thereof went out quickly throughout all the earth. The gospel at first came down upon the world gently and softly, like the dew upon Gideon's fleece; and yet it quickly soaked quite through it: and doubtless this is still the most effectual way to promote it farther. Sweetness or ingenuousness will more command men's minds, than passion, sourness and severity: as the soft



pillow sooner breaks the flint than the hardest marble, let us follow truth in love; and of the two indeed, be contented rather to miss in the conveying of a speculative truth, than to part with love. When we would convince men of any error by the strength of truth, let us withal pour the sweet balm of love upon their heads. Truth and love are two of the most powerful things in the world; and when they both go together, they cannot easily be withstood. The golden beams of truth, and the silken cords of love, twisted together, will draw men on with a sweet violence whether they will or no.

Let us take heed we do not sometimes call that zeal for GOD and his gospel, which is nothing but our own tempestuous and stormy passion. True zeal is a sweet, heavenly and gentle flame, which makes us active for GOD, but always within the sphere of love. It never calls for fire from heaven to consume those that differ from us in their apprehensions. It is like that kind lightning that melts the sword within, but singeth not the scabbard: it strives to save the soul, but hurteth not the body. True zeal is a loving thing, and makes us always active to edification, and not to destruction. If we keep the fire of zeal within the chimney, in its own proper place, it never doth any hurt; it only warmeth, quickeneth, and enliveneth us: but if once we let it break out, and catch hold of the thatch of our flesh, and kindle our corrupt nature, it is no longer zeal, it is no heavenly fire, it is a most destructive and devouring thing. True zeal is a soft and gentle flame, that will not scorch one's hand: it is no predatory or voracious thing. But carnal and fleshly zeal is like the spirit of gunpowder set on fire, that tears and blows up all that stand before it. To conclude, we may learn what kind of zeal it is that we should make use of in promoting the gospel, by an emblem of GOD's own giving in the scripture, even those fiery tongues, that upon the day of Pentecost sat upon the apostles: which surely were harmless flames, for we cannot read that they did any hurt, or that they did so much as singe a hair of their heads.

I will

I will shut up this with that of the apostle, *Let us keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.* Let this soft and silken knot of love tie our hearts together, though our heads and apprehensions cannot meet. Our zeal, if it be heavenly, if it be true vestal fire kindled from above, will not delight to tarry here below, burning up the straw and stubble, and such combustible things, and sending up nothing but gross earthly fumes to heaven; but it will rise up, return back pure as it came down, and will be ever striving to carry up men's hearts to GOD along with it. It will be only occupied about the promoting of those things which are unquestionably good: and when it moves in the irascible way, it will quarrel with nothing but sin. Here let our zeal busy and exercise itself, every one of us beginning first at our own hearts. Let us be more zealous than ever we have yet been in fighting against, and pulling down, the *strong holds of sin and satan* in our hearts. Here let us exercise all our courage, and resolution, and manhood, and magnanimity.

Let us trust in the almighty arm of our GOD, and doubt not but he will as well deliver us from the power of sin in our hearts, as *preserve us from the wrath to come.* Let us go out against these uncircumcised *Philistines*, I mean our sins, not with shield or spear, not in any confidence of our own strength, but in the name of the Lord of hosts, and we shall prevail, we shall overcome them: *for greater is he that is in us, than he that is in them.* *The eternal GOD is our refuge, and underneath are the everlasting Arms; he shall thrust out these enemies before us, and he shall say, Destroy them.*

There are some that dishearten us in this spiritual warfare, and would make us let our weapons fall out of our hands, by working in us a despair of victory. There are some evil spies, that weaken the hands and hearts of the children of *Israel*, and bring an ill report upon that land that we are to conquer, telling of nothing but strange giants, the *sons of Anak* there, that we shall never be able to overcome. *The Amalakites (say they) dwell in the south; the Hittites, Jebusites,*

*Jebusites, Amorites, in the mountains; and the Canaanites by the sea-coast: huge armies of tall invincible lusts: we shall never be able to go against this people: we shall never be able to prevail against our corruptions. Harken not unto them, but hear what Caleb and Joshua say, Let us go up at once, and possess it, for we are able to overcome them; not by our own strength, but by the power of the Lord of Hosts. There are indeed sons of Anak there, there are mighty giant-like lusts that we are to grapple with; nay, there are principalities and powers too that we are to oppose: but the great Michael, the captain of the Lord's host, is with us; he commands in chief for us, and we need not be dismayed. Understand therefore this day, that the Lord thy GOD is he which goeth before thee as a consuming fire; he shall destroy these enemies, and bring them down before thy face. If thou wilt be faithful unto him, and put thy trust in him, as the fire consumeth the stubble, and as the flame burneth up the chaff, so will he destroy thy lusts in thee: their root shall be rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as the dust.*

But lest there should yet haply remain any prejudice against that which I have all this while heartily commended to you, true holiness, and the *keeping of Christ's commandments*, as if it were a legal and a servile thing, that would subject us to a state of bondage: I must needs here add a word or two, either for the prevention or removal of it. I do not therefore mean by holiness, the mere performance of the outward duties of religion, coldly acted over as a task; or our habitual prayings, hearings, fastings, multiplied one upon another (though these are all good, as subservient to a higher end:) but I mean an inward soul and principle of divine life that spiriteth all these, that enliveneth and quickeneth the dead carcase of all outward performances whatsoever. I do not here urge the dead law of outward works, which indeed, if it be alone, subjects us to a state of bondage; but the inward law of the gospel, the *law of the Spirit of life*, than which nothing can be more free and ingenuous: for it doth not actuate us by principles without us, but is an inward, self-moving principle, living in our hearts.

They



They that are actuated only by an *outward law*, are but like those little puppets that skip nimbly up and down, and seem to be full of quick and sprightly motion; whereas they are all the while moved artificially by certain wires and strings from without.

But they that are acted by the new law of the gospel, by the law of the Spirit, have an inward principle in them, that from the centre of itself, puts forth itself freely and constantly into all obedience to the will of Christ. This new law of the gospel is a kind of musical soul, informing the dead organ of our hearts, that makes them of their own accord delight to act harmoniously, according to the rule of GOD's word.

The law that I speak of, is a law of love, which is the most powerful law in the world, and yet it freeth us in a manner from all law without us, because it maketh us become a law to ourselves. The more it prevaleth in us, the more it eateth up and devoureth all other laws without us; just as *Aaron's living rod* did swallow up those rods of the magicians that were made only to counterfeit a little life.

Love is at once a freedom from all law, a state of purest liberty, and yet a law too, of the most constraining and indispensable necessity.

The law of the letter without us sets us in a condition of little liberty, by restraining us from many outward acts of sin; but yet doth not disenthral us from the power of sin in our hearts.

But *the law of the Spirit of life, the gospel-law of love*, puts us into a condition of most pure and perfect liberty: and whosoever really entertains this law, he hath thrust out *Hagar quite*, he hath cast out the bond-woman and her children: from henceforth *Sarah* the free-woman shall live for ever with him, and she shall be to him a mother of many children: her seed shall be *as the sand of the sea-shore for number*, and *as the stars of heaven*. Here is evangelical liberty, here is gospel-freedom, when the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made us free from the law of sin and death: when we have a liberty from sin, and not a liberty

to

to sin; for our dear Lord and Master hath told us, that *Whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin.*

He that lies under the power and vassalage of his base lusts, and yet talks of gospel-freedom, is but like a poor condemned prisoner that in his sleep dreams of being set at liberty, and of walking up and down wheresoever he pleaseth, whilst his legs are all the while locked fast in fetters and irons. To please ourselves with a notion of gospel-liberty, whilst we have not a gospel-principle of holiness within us to free us from the power of sin, is nothing else but to gild over our bonds and fetters, and to fancy ourselves to be in a golden cage. There is a straitness, slavery, and narrowness in sin; sin crowds and crumples up our souls, which if they were freely spread abroad, would be as wide and as large as the whole universe.

No man is truly free but he that hath his will enlarged to the extent of GOD's will, by loving whatsoever GOD loves, and nothing else. Such a one doth not fondly hug this and that particular created good thing, and envassal himself unto it: but he loveth every thing that is lovely, beginning at GOD, and descending down to all his creatures, according to the several degrees of perfection in them. He enjoys a boundless liberty, and a boundless sweetness, according to his boundless love. He enclaspeth the whole world in his out-stretched arms; his soul is as wide as the whole universe, as big as yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Whosoever is once acquainted with this disposition of spirit, he never desires any thing else, and he loves the life of GOD in himself dearer than his own life. To conclude, if we love Christ and *keep his commandments, his commandments will not be grievous unto us: his yoke will be easy, and his burden light.* For it is most true of evangelical obedience, what the wise man speaketh of wisdom, *Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace: she is a tree of life to all that lay hold upon her, and happy are all they that retain her.*

POETRY.

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## Poetry.

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### ADORATION.

**L**ET praise to thee, all-sovereign Power, arise,  
 Who fix'dst the mountains, and who form'dst the skies!  
 Who o'er thy works extend'st a Father's care;  
 Whose kind protection all thy works declare.  
 From the glad climes, where morn, in radiance drest,  
 Starts forth refulgent—to the furthest west,  
 On thee alone the whole dependent lies,  
 And thy rich boon all nature's wants supplies.

Hail! thou great Author of th' extended whole!  
 Revolving seasons blest thee as they roll:  
 The rising sun points out thy pathless way,  
 And smiling moons thy midnight paths betray;  
 The spangling stars in heaven's etherial frame,  
 Shine to thy praise, and sparkle into flame!  
 By thee, spring, summer, autumn, winter, rise;  
 Thou giv'st the smiling, thou the frowning skies;  
 At thy command the softening showers distil,  
 Till genial rays the teeming furrows fill;  
 Thy fostering suns o'er all the globe extend,  
 And, blest by thee, the verdant spires ascend!

See next the product of returning spring:  
 With joy the woods, with joys the vallies ring!  
 Alternate each resound his praise aloud;  
 And dumb creation shouts th' incumbent GOD!

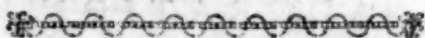
Thy parent-bounty swells the golden ear,  
 And bids the harvest crown the fruitful year:  
 The fruitful year repairs the labourer's pain  
 The peasant's comfort and the master's gain.

The



The winter-board supplies the winnowing floor,  
The beast with fodder, and with bread the poor.  
Each from his hand his destin'd boon receives,  
Feeds at thy board, and on thy bounty lives!

Thus all thy works conspicuous worship raise,  
And nature's *whole* proclaims her Maker's praise :  
Tells out his acts, and spreads his fame abroad—  
Creation's fountain! and the creatures' GOD!



### The VISION.

[From the fourth Chapter of JOB.]

'T WAS at the dark and silent hour of night,  
When airy visions skim before the sight,  
When men entranc'd in balmy sleep are laid,  
And deeper slumbers ev'ry sense invade :  
A voice, shrill sounding, pierc'd my list'ning ear,  
The solemn accent still methinks I hear.  
And lo! arose before my wond'ring eyes  
A shapeless spectre of stupendous size ;  
Sullen, it me approach'd with awful grace,  
And frowning dreadful star'd me in the face.  
Deep sunk my heart, my hair erected stood,  
And sweaty drops my shaking limbs bedew'd.  
At length a voice the solemn silence broke,  
And thus, in hollow tone, the phantom spoke.

“ What art thou, mortal man, thou breathing clod ?  
Thou daring rival of thy author, GOD ?  
Is then this heap of animated dust  
Pure as his Maker ? as his Maker, just ?  
What are the gifts to human nature giv'n,  
That man usurps the attributes of heav'n ?  
Th' angelic hosts, that on the Godhead wait,  
And issue forth his ministers of fate,  
Not of themselves perform his great command,  
But own his guidance and o'er-ruling hand.

Shall

Shall then presumptuous man his actions sway,  
This lordly tenant of a lump of clay?  
Who from a sordid mass derives his birth,  
And drops again into his mother-earth;  
Whose carcase mouldering in the silent tomb,  
Devouring reptiles mangle and consume?  
Look round the surface of this earthly ball;  
See grandeur vanish, and ev'n nations fall!  
What thousands die, the race of being run,  
Between the rising and the setting sun!  
See man each hour resign his fleeting breath,  
And sink unheeded in the jaws of death!  
Thus falls thy boasted wisdom, mortal man,  
A cloud its substance, and its date a span!  
Thy short perfection on thy life depends,  
At death's great period all thy knowledge ends."

ON GOD'S EVERLASTING LOVE.

**T**O the meek and gentle Lamb  
I pour out my complaint,  
Will not hide from thee my shame,  
But tell thee what I want:  
I am full of self and pride,  
I am all unclean, unclean,  
Till thy Spirit here abide,  
I cannot cease from sin.

Clearly do I see the way,  
My foot is on the path;  
Now, this instant, now I may  
Draw near by simple faith:  
Thou art not a distant GOD,  
Thou art still to sinners near,  
Every moment, if I would,  
My heart might feel thee near.

Free as air thy mercy streams,  
Thy universal grace  
Shines with undistinguish'd beams  
On all the fallen race;  
All from thee a power receive  
To reject, or hear thy call,  
All may choose to die, or live;  
Thy grace is free for all.

All the hindrance is in me:  
Thou ready art to save;  
But I will not come to thee,  
That I thy life may have.  
Stubborn and rebellious still,  
From thy arms of love I fly:  
Yes, I will be lost; I will,  
In spite of mercy, die.

Holy, meek, and gentle Lamb,  
With me what canst thou do?  
Tho' thou leav'st me as I am,  
I own thee good and true.  
Thou would'st have me life embrace,  
Thou for me and all wast slain;  
Thou hast offer'd me thy grace;  
'Twas I that made it vain.

O that I might yield at last,  
By dying love subdu'd!  
Lord, on thee my soul is cast,  
The purchase of thy blood:  
If thou wilt the sinner have,  
Thou canst work to will in me;  
When, and as thou plearest save:  
I leave it all to thee.



THE LOSS OF ETERNAL LIFE NOT OWING TO  
ANY ABSOLUTE DECREE.

JESU, my hope, my help, my power,  
On thee I ever call,  
O save me from temptation's hour,  
Or into hell I fall.

If by thy light I now perceive  
My utter helplessness,  
O do not for one moment leave  
The sinner in distress.

I cannot trust my treach'rous heart,  
I shall myself betray :  
I must be lost, if thou depart,  
A final cast-away.

I feel within me unsubdu'd  
A cursed, carnal will,  
It hates, and starts from all that's good,  
And cleaves to all that's ill.

My soul could yield to every vice  
And passion in excess,  
My soul to all the height could rise  
Of daring wickedness.

The blackest crime upon record  
I freely could commit,  
The sins by nature most abhorr'd  
My nature could repeat.

I could the devil's law receive,  
Unless restrain'd by thee ;  
I could, (good GOD !) I could believe  
The *horrible decree*.

I could believe that GOD is hate,  
The GOD of love and grace,  
Did damn, pass by, and reprobate  
The most of human race.

Farther

POETRY.

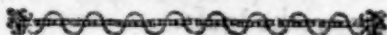
Farther than this I cannot go,  
Till *Tophet* take me in :  
But O forbid that I should know  
This mystery of sin.

Jesu, to thee for help I fly,  
Support my soul, and guide,  
Keep as the apple of an eye,  
Under thy shadow hide.

With-hold my foot from every snare,  
From every sin defend,  
Throughout the way my spirit bear,  
And bring me to the end.

Wisdom and strength to thee belong :  
Folly and sin are mine :  
But out of weakness make me strong,  
But in my darkness shine.

My strength will I ascribe to thee,  
My wisdom from above,  
And praise to all eternity  
Thine all-redeeming love.



A SHORT HYMN.

*John xviii. 20. In secret have I said nothing.*

O Might I like Jesus be !  
Foe to guile and secrecy,  
Walk as always in his sight,  
Free and open as the light !  
Jesus, Lord, to me impart  
The true nobleness of heart,  
The unfeign'd simplicity,  
The pure mind which was in thee.

THE